

# THE UNIVERSITY REVIEW

A LITERARY MONTHLY



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Cover illustration by Michael Cosper

# Life's sandbox

BY JENNIFER TAKOS

Out from the rear view mirror  
appears the clock of life  
With time ticking in your ear  
and time tocking in your eyes  
your heart skips a beat

The dry sand slips through  
the child's fingers as he  
scoops and dumps the sand  
losing everything he ever had

Out from the rear view mirror  
appears the clock of life  
With time ticking in your ear  
and time tocking in your eyes  
your heart skips a beat

It arrives upon destination  
with the rotation  
only to depart as fast  
trying to complete its  
never-ending adventure

Out from the rear view mirror  
appears the clock of life  
With time ticking in your ear  
and time tocking in your eyes  
your heart skips a beat

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We sincerely regret the omission of background information on some of our contributors. A special thanks goes to Mike Cosper, Carolyn Benning and Jenni Fleeger.

The Editors,  
Wayne Kunert and David E. Brumfield

# Old man Thomas

BY JIM CAIN

Old man Thomas who laughs with a frown  
Only yesterday a boy a man and now  
Gray of hair that misses his brow  
Sunken eyes that stare that glare...down

His frame so twisted and frayed by time  
Bent and dwarfed like an ocean pine  
Clinging to memories etched on his mind  
A portrait of endurance sketched from lines

Old man Thomas the man was a boy  
Laughed and cried and played with toys  
His world was quaint and filled with joy  
Old man Thomas loved that boy

His life so free and dreams so grand  
What reason to end; he could not understand  
With one boyish try at a futile stand  
Overwhelmed by humanity he became a man

Old man Thomas the soldier the war  
Drafted into service he knew no more  
Honor and dignity the nation implored  
Reverence to life a pledge to scorn

Engaged in a battle of internal strife  
Shrouded in darkness as bleak as a moonless night  
Forced into a position of flight or fight  
Old man Thomas he took a life

Old man Thomas the soldier and change  
Formed from the blood stained mud ordained  
By God and country near insane  
The life he took and his the same

An empty shell that moves through space  
A victim of ignorance formed by fate  
Whose dreams are lost to the muddied lake  
Filled with life never to consecrate

Old man Thomas it is clear as to why  
You laugh with a frown so you don't cry.

## FICTION

# Research and roller skates

*'He had his goodbye drink, alone, across the street in the bar.'*

BY MICHAEL J. FITZGERALD

Thorpe heard the laugh and turned to see the smile on the woman's face. She walked toward him, across the parking lot just as he remembered her.

There was no hesitation; she looked straight at him, while he stood awkwardly, wondering what to do with his hands.

Thorpe hoped for a hug, but saw her hand offered instead. A poor substitute. He held it anyway.

The lines on her face were more pronounced now, tiny little wrinkles connecting to bigger ones near her eyes. Thorpe could see she was letting her hair, once honey-blond, get a touch of gray in it, too. The voice was the same: throaty and deep, a smoker's heartiness. She could be heard easily across a room in a crowd, but her voice could be seductive, too, when it needed to be.

"What are you doing here?"

Thorpe realized he was still holding her hand and let it go.

"Files. I have to pick up some files from projects I did here. Need them for a proposal I'm working on."

She smiled and took his hand again. "Good to see you, Thorpe. Really."

She held the wide, glass door open for him as they walked into the lobby of the large, single-story office building. A yawning receptionist gave a flicker of recognition, then asked Thorpe to sign a guest register. The woman from the parking lot smiled again at him and disappeared in a maze of tall file cabinets, desks and wire baskets.

Thorpe stood by the reception desk feeling his face beginning to flush. There was a gentle ripple running through the large open office as a few, weak-handed waves came his way. A few heads nodded, too, and eyebrows arched, but there were no invitations, no back-slapping, no hearty, "welcome homes" coming his way.

He really didn't expect any, not from the survivors of the office purge that had sent him packing after a not-too-quiet leave taking — including a shouting match with the company president and an offer to step outside and settle a lot of scores. His personal staff of seven conveniently left early that day while he cleaned out his desk and file cabinets. They neatly avoided any farewells and goodbye drinks with their boss of five years. He had his goodbye drink, alone, across the street in the bar that served as an informal second office for most of the people who worked for the company. That night a young blonde waitress had been serving

drinks on roller skates, skating from table to table while Thorpe drank too much and said too much to no one in particular.

In the distance, now, he could see his old desk, still stacked with blue and green report folders and proposals. A computer terminal sat where his old Underwood typewriter had rested.

"Well, look at this," a voice behind him said. "Back to stay, I hope?"

Thorpe turned to see the stringy body of the middle-aged woman who ran the company accounting department. She was no longer gray, he noted, but now a flaming redhead. A wig, he guessed.

"Just here for the day," Thorpe heard himself say. "Research." The woman nodded understandingly without smiling and walked off.

He hesitated a moment, then another, then walked up past the president's secretary who kept her nose buried in a magazine and didn't bother to look up. Thorpe

hoped for a challenge from her — a loud one that would bring the president out of his chair to his office door where a booming greeting would be unavoidable — and public.

Instead, he walked in, right up to the desk as he had so often before and received the same, laconic "Well, what's going on?" from the man who had driven Thorpe out of company and off to another city. It was Rotary Club day for the president, otherwise, he would love to have lunch, he said. And, gee, it was time to go. "See you Thorpe. We'll talk after lunch."

The bar and grill where Thorpe had lunched so often still featured the businessman's special of wine and a diet plate of cheese and fruit, but the price was no longer a bargain. He had a club sandwich and the turkey hurt his back teeth.

His former assistant filled him in on a handful of gossipy items about the president and how the division had been since he left. His assistant had the businessman's special and an extra glass of Chablis while Thorpe sipped coffee and wondered if she had always been fat, but he hadn't noticed.

A good friend had committed himself to a local mental hospital and was cutting out paper dolls, when they would let him have scissors, Thorpe learned. An old archrival in the company had been caught in the lounge late at night with one of the salesmen, both drunk and naked.

Both men were fired, she said.

Most things hadn't changed, she told him. She gulped a third glass of wine in two swallows before they went back to the office.

During the afternoon in the documents



room, Thorpe's former staff filed in one at a time, slowly, while he sat with stacks of papers around him, deciding what to photocopy. They inquired how he'd been; what was he doing now? They giggled, asking him if he'd heard about the incident in the lounge and, yes, they still did go across the street after work for a drink most nights. Tonight? Of course. Good seeing you, Thorpe, they said.

He picked through the files between interruptions, cursing silently that he'd left, realizing his best work might be in front of him on the table right now. He kept running across projects he'd worked on or consulted. He touched them lightly, like old friends, as he stacked them up for the copy machine.

About 3 p.m., Thorpe saw the president peer out of his office door, stretching his neck out, but leaving his body hidden. "Lizard neck," they called him, Thorpe remembered. Thorpe gathered his papers into a pile and put several files away, figuring on catching the company president near the coffee machine glaring at people taking their union-mandated 10-minute break in the afternoon.

But the president wasn't there.

Back at the president's office, the door was closed, though music still could be heard playing inside. His secretary said the president had left for the day, but did Mr. Thorpe want to leave a message? If it was urgent, she would call the president at home.

Thorpe went back to the familiar friendly files for the rest of the afternoon, listening late in the day as desk drawers closed with finality, briefcases snapped shut, and coats rustled.

The night janitor was getting ready to lock the door when he told Thorpe he had been hired on Thorpe's last day. Thorpe's successor was a real joker, the janitor said, real popular with the staff, too, and a quite a drinker.

"I'll bet," Thorpe said as he left.

The parking lot was empty, except for Thorpe's tired auto. His former assistant's car was gone, too. They'd said their real farewells at lunch at the restaurant to avoid the gossip about them they had both loved so much before. Thorpe debated about going across the street to the bar where he knew his former staff might be. He remembered the roller-skating waitress and the night he'd had there before.

He measured his day as a qualified success. He had copies of reports he could use — but certainly didn't need. He had said a few things, but left a lot more unsaid.

In his pocket, he felt a hundred or so of his former business cards, printed when he was first promoted to vice president. He meant to give them back to the president today as a dark joke — a comment on the everlasting cheapness of the firm. But now they felt like a rock and it was a long way across the street to the bar.

The night janitor waved goodbye through the glass and Thorpe stepped off the curb, his hand in his pocket. He hoped at least the waitress on roller skates was still working in the bar.

She would enjoy the story about the two men in the company lounge. And even if she didn't, she would listen, Thorpe was sure.

## SATIRE

## Destiny

BY AMY RUSSELL

Desolate.  
The hot grains of sand blow,  
Blinding my eyes.  
Peering intensely into the distance,  
All I see are hills;  
Smooth and rolling to eternity.  
I stand motionless  
Under the noon sun.  
The low moan of the heavy wind  
And blazing solar rays  
Weigh me down.  
I look far and near,  
I still see no future.  
I've nowhere to go.  
Though the picture doesn't change,  
My watch still ticks.  
I don't fear,  
I know it's time.  
I pull myself with the last of my will  
And search for my  
Destiny.

## DACHAU

THE FIRST GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP 1933-1945



## Lost in the system

*'If he can't learn to read by next Thursday,  
he's off the football team.'*

BY KENT W. LESLIE

The Dean of English of Wapner University leaned over his desk, dazed, at Martin Thudpucker Jr. As far as the test papers before him were concerned, Thudpucker was the dumbest man in the universe.

"A two," said the dean. "We tested you three times. You can't get any higher than a two."

"Cool," said Thudpucker Jr.

"A two," said the dean, "is functionally illiterate. You aren't functionally illiterate, are you?"

Thudpucker Jr. shrugged.

"You got 940 on the English part of your SATs."

"Cool," said Thudpucker Jr.

"So you can read, can't you?"

Thudpucker Jr. shrugged. "I forgot a lot over the summer."

"You can't have forgotten that much."

"I forgot a lot."

"You can't tell me that you flunked your English placement exam because you can't read, can you?"

"I forgot a lot," said Thudpucker Jr. "Maybe."

"Do you expect me," roared the dean, "to believe that?"

"I dunno," said Thudpucker Jr. He burped.

The dean swirled around in his swivel chair, facing both the coach and the principal of Thudpucker Jr.'s alma mater, the Close To Mid-Central (But West) High School in East Los Angeles. "He could read back then, couldn't he?"

"I suppose," said the principal. "He might have."

"He can memorize a playbook," said the coach. "He passed his SATs. Of course he can read."

"He got," stated the dean, "a two."

"Oh, come on," said the coach. "When is the best dang running back in the history of Close To Mid-Central (But West) High School gonna ever need to know how to read? He doesn't need to read! He needs to play football!"

"We've got rules," said the dean. "If his grade point average is below a C, he can't compete in athletic events."

"He had a passing grade in high school," said the principal. "D minus, I think. Let me check the records." He thumbed through a manila folder.

The coach said, "You know, educating Thudpucker here will ruin him. He's a football player. He plays football. He can kill the average guy walking

down the street with one punch. He doesn't really need to know much to make a lot of money."

"That's a comforting thought," said the dean. "So why is he going to college, if he isn't here to learn?"

"NFL scouts," said Thudpucker Jr. "And babes."

"Here we go," said the principal. He pulled out a Scantron grading sheet. "Zero point zero."

"Zero point zero?" exclaimed the dean. "How did he graduate?"

"It says he didn't," said the principal. "Some scout from your college asked him if he wanted to join your football team."

"I sent in my application," said Thudpucker Jr. "They said I could play football. They gave me a car, too."

"Don't you have a rule that says he can't play if his grades are too low?" asked the dean.

"Are you nuts?" the coach said.

"We tried that," said the principal. "It didn't work. The kids got into trouble and the parents complained."

"And we're the best!" shouted the coach. "Rick 'em, rack 'em, rick 'em, ruck 'em, get that ball and really fight!"

Thudpucker Jr. scratched his crotch.

"This is pitiful," said the dean. "Just pitiful. This young man has been lost in the system and all you can do is talk about football."

"Football," groaned Thudpucker Jr.

"Now, I'll tell you what," said the dean. "I'll make this easy. We'll get a tutor to work with Mr. Thudpucker here and we'll work night and day to get him to read."

"Football," groaned Thudpucker Jr.

"And," continued the dean, "we will try what we can, but if he can't learn to read by next Thursday, he's off the football team."

A pained look came into Thudpucker Jr.'s face. "No football?"

"This is, after all, a school of higher learning. Students are expected to learn here, not to just play football."

"Want football!" roared Thudpucker Jr.

"Participation in athletics, after all," said the dean, "is a right and a privilege. You have to earn that right."

"WANT FOOTBALL!" shouted Thudpucker Jr. He was foaming.

"What's more important," continued the dean, "learning or football?"

"FOOTBALL!" shouted Thudpucker, and he grabbed the dean by the shirtfront.

"How does that grab you?" said the coach.

Thudpucker drop-kicked the dean through the window and into the street. "Touchdown," he said.

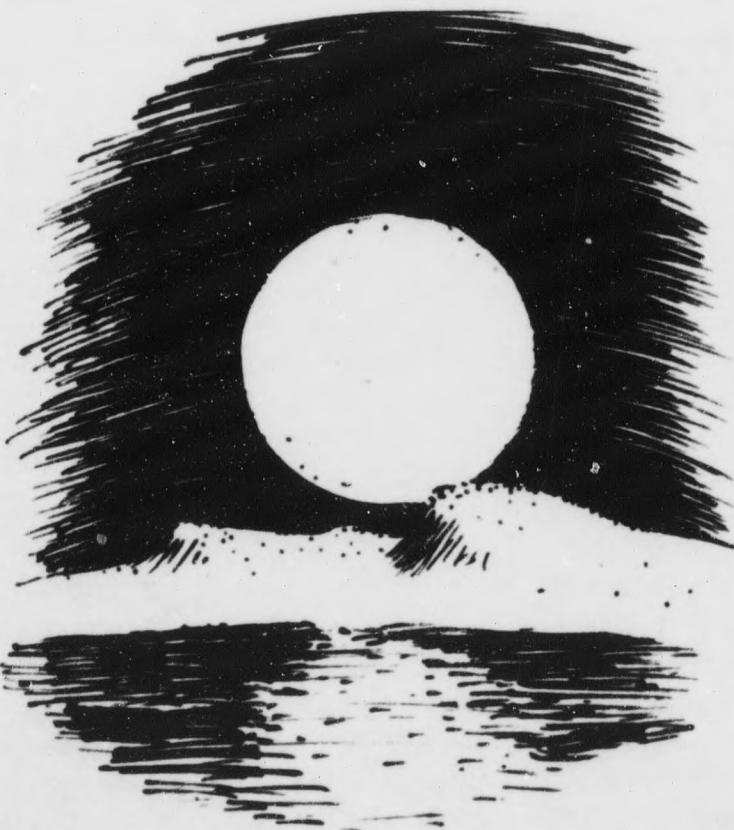




Photo by Rachael Orvino

## Desert dream

BY STEVEN W. LOCKETT



I woke up. For one clear silent moment I was, but then became myself. She lay beside me. I felt her warmth, the smile in her breathing. Cold desert air recoiled my sense, the night suddenly full of distant murmurings, the blankets thinning as anxiety shivered my body. Creeping outward, my sense of eye saw the moonlight comb the weathered sandstone into furrowed slopes. New to this world of boundaries, my reconstructed self saw rock slip into lake, the fearsome depth covered by the water's surface, which chipped against the shore with a thousand hammers of dancing light.

Churning thought whirls upon its center, until some resistance breaks down, and a curiosity develops; thought searches for its source. Once glimpsed, the danger is realized. There is no escape, no direction, and no ending. There was no beginning, only a forgetting. And I will go on forgetting until I remember.  
"Wake up," I nudged. "I'm cold."  
She teased me with a grin as we gathered blankets for the van.

## FICTION

# Flipside of manifestation

BY DAN THOMAS

Chunks of sun,  
Rain a soft throbbing  
Massage upon haired skin.  
Dive oscillating through  
Moist warm separated flesh  
Of flower rose stems,  
With roots prodding harder.  
To drown doubly higher,  
Grab a dolphin's dorsal

FIN

As it pulls fast,  
Up though smoldering ashes,  
Past rolling tobacco  
Thighs of sweaty Cuban women  
Past sweet cotton  
Candied plantation walls.  
Into the smoky whistling

WIND

Strips barer than  
A skeleton's skeleton,  
But a tie nooses tight.  
Hanging low from a pussy  
Cats perch in a tree,  
Eulogies progressively  
Dance in the

LOVE

Canal of an erotic mind.  
Longing for sweet fulfilling  
Whiskey, apricots, tequila,  
And molded fruit-filled jellies,  
That fits better than a

GLOVE

That blocks the clouds  
Sunshine screeching behind  
Green tinted soda bottles,  
To spray a crashing collage  
Of gray shades and hues,  
Until the emergence  
Of the eternally holy white

DOVE



# Where life is an iffy thing

By Robert L. Canody II

Click. Click, click, click. Click. Here I am again. I really shouldn't complain about it, though. I mean, I did volunteer for this duty. After five years on the force, I figured I could handle being on the edge like this. But none of the training I had gone through could prepare me for the reality of it all. Sure, busting small-time criminals and chasing punks could have a certain amount of risk, but that was rookie work. Easy. Minimal hazard. Add some adventure, I told myself. Join the Drug Enforcement Team; it will be a blast. Yeah, blast me to a hospital bed with tubes coming out of everywhere, or worst, to an early grave.

This is my eighth raid. I've only been with the DET squad for three weeks, though. I've really moved up to the big time. Waiting like this, waiting for word to crash in and bust the place up. It really isn't so much the sitting here that eats a man up; it's what goes through the mind that is so jarring. I'm still new to this detail, but God, I feel like a ten-year veteran!

Since my first raid I have been point man. I'm the first to go through the door after it is crashed. They say that the best time for a member to buy it is while he is still new. It makes it easier, not for the member, but the team. I can understand that point of view, but I find it tough to accept. The worst part is that I will adopt that practice when we get a new member to the team. I just know I will. It is almost time, I can just feel it. God, I hate being on point. Some of the members say they enjoyed it, but I don't see any rush for volunteers.

I won't forget my first raid. Ever. It was the first hot week in months. Already, the streets were alive with violence. Gangs were out claiming and terrorizing their turf, setting up shop to sell their dope, ice, crank, coke, what-have-you. I had been assigned to the DET for only one day and I was going out to the field. Quickest way to get trained was to experience live fire, I guessed.

I rode with some other team members to the staging point. There was no idle chatter; actually, no real talk at all. The sun had disappeared a few hours before, but it had left its heat in the asphalt of the abandoned parking lot we gathered in. I felt so green, didn't know what I was supposed to do. I just listened to the other members while preparing my weapons and harness like they did. The team leader said there might be automatic rifles inside the target house. Made me wish I had some Kevlar covering me, but I knew a vest would only get in my way.

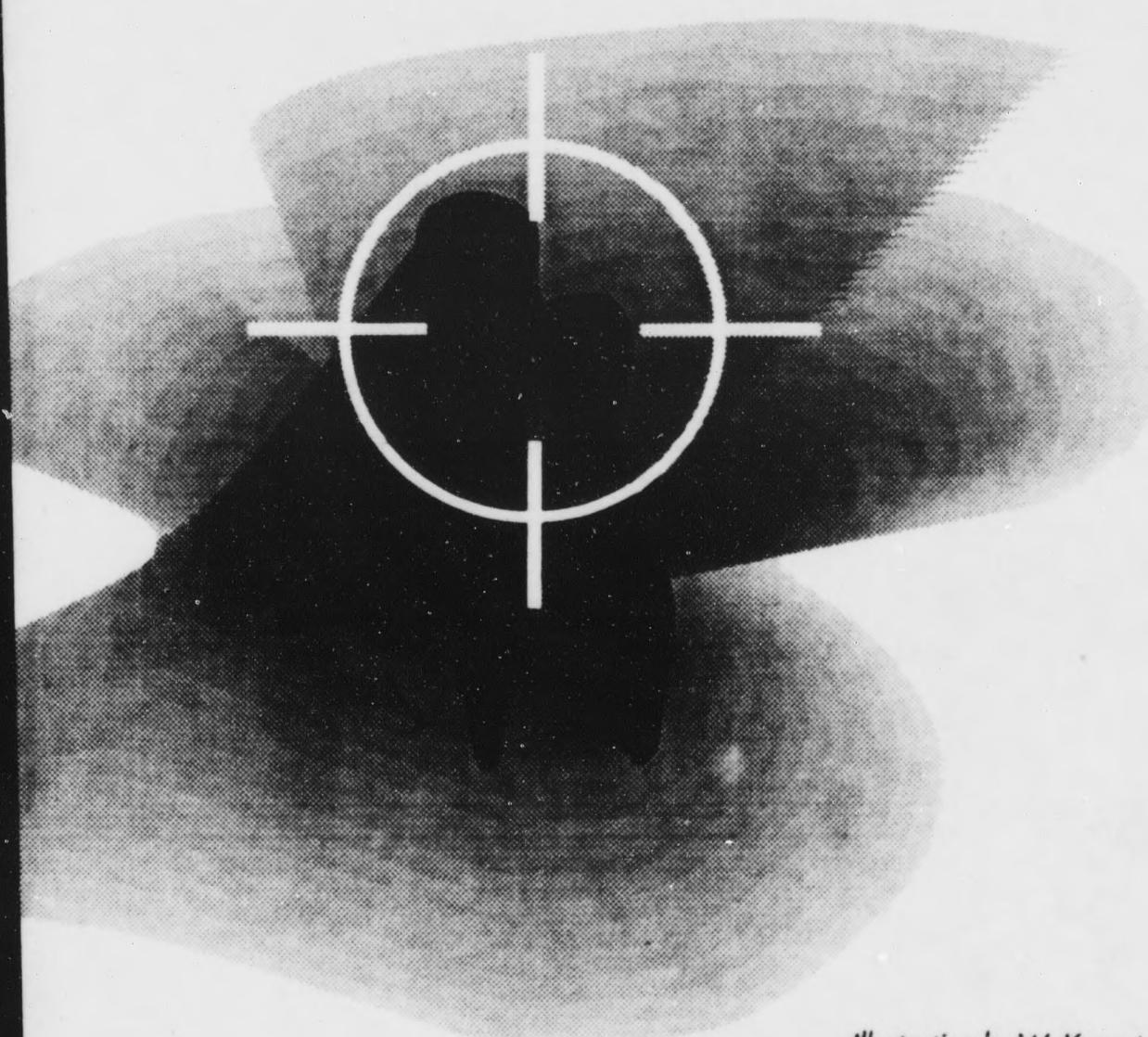


Illustration by W. Kunert

slow me down. Assault rifles against my HK Mini 5.

The team leader went over details about the house and surrounding area, then asked for someone to be the Point. I felt every eye descend upon me, as though it were clear I would be the volunteer. "Don't worry," some of them said. "It will be over before you know it." Sure. "Just follow your instincts." My instincts were telling me to hide. This was for real! I wasn't fantasizing or skipping reality anymore.

After all the details were cleared up, we climbed into the two unmarked vehicles. Seven of us were going on this raid; too many could screw it all up. We drove calmly, but I was shaking inside. The adrenalin was waiting to bust my heart open; my throat was closing! I couldn't breathe! "Clear your head," and "Grab a hold, man," I kept telling myself.

I don't remember actually pulling up outside the house, but I remember running at the door screaming that we had a warrant before kicking the

\*\*\*\*\*  
"I can't shoot him, he is just a kid"



\*\*\*\*\*  
door in. I felt a jolt of pain in my leg, but I was too hyped to care. I was past the door before it fully crashed off the hinge, following my gun. I didn't know what I was doing, just making a lot of noise and acting tough.

I was inside, but I had no time to take in my surroundings. The kid holding the rifle commanded my immediate attention. I thought to myself, "I can't shoot him, he is just a kid." Except this kid had a gun and was tracking it onto me. I just froze there. Gunfire lashed out in the confines of the room; I could feel the pressure of the explosions with every nerve. "NNNNNNNOOOOOO!!!!" I screamed to myself. I think.

I watched the kid's chest twitch from the impact of the gunfire, saw the wall behind him adopt his blood and parts of him. "No time to care," the team member said as he rushed on past me without breaking his stride. I followed him into the kitchen. Finding a woman there, he ordered her to the floor, told me to watch her and left to help search the rest of the house.

Within a minute the entire house was secure. No one else besides the woman and the stuff. That stuff could have been me. The team leader said I did OK for my first raid, that it's normal for the fear to freeze a member up when he is new. What a way for him to cover up the fact that I seized at a deadly moment.

That may have only been three weeks ago, but to me it feels like years. I could quit, but I am getting too much of a rush out of it, enjoying the flirts I exchange with death. I realize that while I hate being in this position, I wouldn't change for anything in the world. Rather ironic, I think: they couldn't pay me enough to be out here, but they couldn't drag me away, either.

It's time. The leader signals for us to load up for the short ride over. Each time I go out, I have no idea what to expect, but I am ready for it just the same. I lock and load. Click.

## Requiem for Parsival

BY WILLIAM S. BOOM

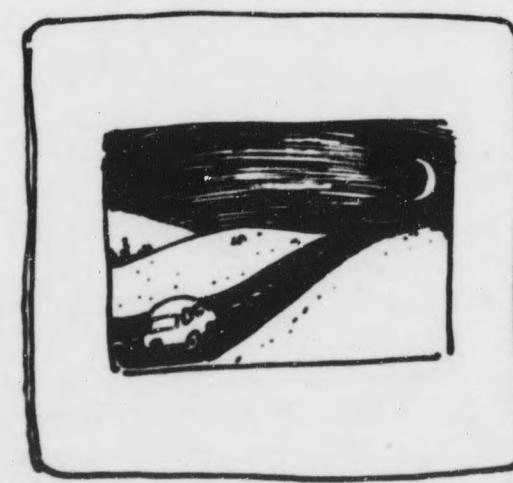
I am halfway to paradise  
Highway 80 towards the City  
The city that conceived me pulls me home  
And frozen moments of my past  
Play themselves for me, a private slideshow

Here's a shot of me  
Staying up late  
I write, rework, define this feeling  
With infinite fondness I watch  
The sleeping body on the bed  
It is glorious creation, these emotions  
In a place where none have been before  
She waits for me to come to bed  
To come to a decision  
To come to my senses  
But I'd slain too many dragons  
And could not take off my armor

Here's one of us  
We kept each other warm  
Standing on the point at Monterey  
Quietness surrounding us, we are alone except for  
Three wet-suited divers  
Beneath a lighted buoy in the darkness  
They are looking for a love  
That was always just out of our reach

I drive on through the wintry night  
Window down, the heater on full blast, I am  
Wrapped in wool clothing, the chill wind bites  
My unprotected face, the City  
Pulls me closer  
Barely aware of the road,  
I stare at nothing  
I think about the one that got away

Next slide, please.



## FICTION

## CROSSINGS

By  
Russ  
Albright

Having no option but to obey a direct command, I slid down the bank and waded into the river. Cursing under my breath, I went into the swift dark river, carefully feeling my way with each step. Well into the stream, I slipped into a hole and went under with a grunt, a yelp of distress, and panicked as the river quickly closed over me. The sling of the Henry slipped up around my neck and while trying to get free of it, found myself in deep water. I was quickly thrust along downstream and, after what seemed forever, I burst to the surface just long enough to spout water and cry for help. Again I went under, struggled, and then passed out. The only sensation I had before losing consciousness was someone grasping my hair in what seemed an attempt to pull me deeper....

I had arrived in this situation as a result of becoming a soldier at the age of seventeen and a veteran in a few short months. I made the decision to run away from home and join the 23rd Illinois Brigade when it was forming up in Galesburg early in the war. My family had enough influence to keep me out of this secession war and was bent on doing just that. I thought I was running toward independence, but instead of a strong father, I now have the whole military command telling me where, when and what to do.

We had been engaged in fighting a number of diverse battles for many months and the glories of war had sorely paled. It isn't just the death and maiming, but all the deprivations that go with living out of doors in all kinds of weather while constantly on the move. The food rations are inedible to

anyone but starving people and soldiers. The edibles that don't smell bad are so hard you can only gnaw and wash them down with stale, cloudy water. Fresh cool water is something we can only recall from our pre-war memory. Some of the older troopers make a foul smelling brew they call "homemade"; it's supposed to pass for liquor, but it's only virtue is as a pain killer. Others have taught me how to make a strange-tasting brew or "coffee" from some of the local roots and berries. At times I have to ask whether it's "beer" or "coffee" after a drink from someone else's canteen. There was a time when this made the boys laugh, but now laughter is as rare as fresh supplies.

The ranks are thinning as much from disease as from the fighting. Many of the young men have never been around anybody outside their family, and Doc says that's why they're sick so often. Many of them just seem to catch a cold and slowly waste away and die. It seems so strange to see these big strong farm boys get a runny

***"I slipped into a hole and went under with a grunt, a yelp of distress, and panicked as the river quickly closed over me."***

nose, start to cough, and in a few weeks, they're gone. Everyone is a mass of welts during the warm seasons from the hordes of insects that follow everywhere.

At best you would never be able to tell we are soldiers and not a ragged bunch of gun-toting thieves. Our uniforms consist mostly of patches and there aren't a half-dozen buttons left in our entire squad. The only time we have to care for our gear is spent keeping our rifles clean and our munitions dry.

Only a handful of us are left from the original brigade and we have fought under several other flags as we move from one battle to another. Our unit was decimated at Fredericksburg and what is left has been shuffled from one troop to another where we're needed to patch up the line. We are now veterans which means, I think, that we have given up our youth to the war. It doesn't mean we have grown accustomed to the gore and obscenities that accompany battle. We have developed a skill at surviving on very little and spend much of our energy hating and fearing an enemy whose sole purpose is to take our lives. We quake at the rebel yells that wake us during the night from dreams of attacking Rebs. Sometimes it seems as if there is an endless supply of Confederates who are bigger, stronger and absolutely fearless. They always seem to know three days ahead of us where we are going and when we'll arrive.

We had been looking for the shallows in this twisting river for several hours and found them yesterday. The Ohio unit, which

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## BOOK REVIEW

## Will as Will

*'Will brings us face to face with the variety of mankind'*

BY DAVID C. RYAN

To his enthusiasts, reading a George F. Will column pits them on the shoulder of a giant — not a giant in the sense of a modern Aquinas or Aristotle, but a contemporary figure who is tall enough to see across America and locate its complex, cultural mechanisms.

With *Suddenly*, his fourth collection of essays, Will gathers his work from his syndicated columns and his biweekly contributions to *Newsweek*; and, with his weekly appearances on *This Week with David Brinkley*, Will is perhaps the most influential and conspicuous figure working today. He is the inexhaustible keeper of the American life.

Yet what use is a collection of

essays? It is, as Will's editor would tell us, a unique opportunity to take stock of a writer in one sitting. Not only is this book a checklist or survey of Will's work but it is, in essence, a measure of what Will stands for and a collection of what he believes to be the important topics which concern America.

What Will is concerned with is what every politically aware citizen finds interesting: his community, the Constitution and the issues which bind these two entities together (or, more importantly, the issues which *divide* these two entities). Whether the issues are abortion, flag burning, the boundaries of judiciary powers, the meaning of free speech, racism, etc., Will probes his subjects with enormous skill and passion. Unlike some brave yet senseless columnists who try to lead their readers across a wild political wilderness and end up lost, Will has a finely

tuned compass which allows him to direct his readers with an intellectual seriousness which goes far beyond the normal discoveries of the routine. As our guide, Will is not satisfied with pointing out the origin of the species or yodeling into a deep canyon so he can hear the echoes of his own voice. Will brings us face to face with the variety of mankind — often showing the many faces of humanity: his absurd side, his corruption and his brighter touches.

As a political commentator, some pundits and reviewers have gone far enough to assert that Will is the natural successor to Walter Lippmann. But I think we can value Will far more than the meandering Lippmann because as readers we have learned not to trust the flip-flopping acrobatics of Lippmann. We can trust Will to be Will — a talented, able columnist and a popularizer of history. No one is better than Will (with

the exception of Daniel J. Boorstin) in popularizing historical references.

As a political figure and journalist, Will is what one would archaically refer to as a Literary Politician. As a modern political philosopher, Will sits not within the complex political machinery which superintends over our society, but wisely sits outside of it. Wise because Will could not be the journalist he is if he were officially a sovereign servant.

Although on television he can appear to be a stuffed shirt, Will is stiff as a broom handle. However, we cannot expect the former professor to snort and huff-n-puff like Pat Buchanan, or surgically destroy an opponent with glee like William F. Buckley — because this is not his role. Will somehow manages to fit nicely in between these two men, with other columnists fitting neatly on the peripheries (like, John McGaughlin,

James Kilpatrick, etc.).

When taking stock of conservative speakers one quickly notices an absence of notable liberal speakers. Why? Well, perhaps the public does not find people like Michael Kinsley or Carl Rowan interesting enough to swallow since they can get their diet of liberalism from the editorials of their morning daily. Or perhaps these particular conservative speakers are just better than the standard leftist offerings of Jack Germond and Alexander Cockburn.

Whether it appears on *Crossfire* or John McGaughlin's show, political debate is a healthy public habit. Public discourse is a tradition that is not uniquely American, but has become as American as our very own Constitution. And although George Will is but one participant in this pluralistic pool of competitors, he is perhaps its best swimmer.

Crossings, from page 8

we'd been waiting to reinforce us, arrived at dusk last night. Now we were ready to attempt the crossing and the Rebels had been taunting us from behind the timbers on the far side through most of the night. Since they know this country so well, they knew where we would have to cross and had plenty of time to dig in and fortify.

In that quiet hour, just before dawn, our officers went down the line preparing us for the crossing with words of faith and encouragement. I joined the others in my company in silent prayer and made sure my gear was secure while trying to stay unnoticed. My captain would be looking for someone to test the ford across the river. There were never any volunteers for that job. It is scary to be so exposed as you are all alone in full view of the enemy. The only reason they don't fire is the fear of exposing their location to our troops before we attack. The captain stopped behind me and I tensed as he tapped my shoulder and gave me the order that would almost drown me....

When I came to, I was looking into the worried eyes of a drenched soldier thumping me on the back with unpleasant regularity. "Try to relax and rest for a few minutes," he said as I started struggling to get up to show him I was OK.

"The last I knew I thought I was drowning. Did you pull me out and drag me here?" I now realized we were downstream from our lines and hidden behind some willows at the river's edge. "Where did you come from?" I was still trying to ask questions while gagging and spitting out water.

"You slipped and fell into the river and didn't come up, so I had to jump in to see what you found so interesting under water. I was lucky to find you and luckier to be able to drag you out," he said before asking, "How long have you been soldiering?"

"I've been in since '62, but it seems like forever. I'm with the Illinois and found that hole while marking the shallows. It sounds like somebody found a safe ford up there, judging by all the shooting."

"It's going to be a busy morning, that's for sure," he offered as he concentrated on removing some burrs from his pant legs. "We ought to get back, but — what the heck! It feels good just to stretch out somewhere for a minute without worrying about getting shot or taking some fool's orders. Anyway, you should take it easy for a time. You know, at home, going shootin' was the most fun we ever had. Now, I don't much care if I ever see a rifle again."

I looked at him for a moment, thinking how nice it was just to hear a stranger voicing my own thoughts. "Sounds fine to me," I agreed. "I'm going to have a rest and build some nerve before I can face the river crossing again. I never did like water that's taller than I am."

"Everybody is afraid of something. You're afraid of deep water and I'm scared of horses. My family raises pigs and they can be pretty brutish and kind of mean, sometimes, but I hate horses. My real name's Ben, even though my family calls me Paddlefoot 'cause a horse stepped on my foot when I was young and sort of flattened it out."

"Don't you have any horses you have to

work on your farm?" I asked.

He seemed far away for a moment, like he was just checking his mind's eye to remember what home was like. Then he smiled and replied, "Just an old mare my mother uses as a carriage horse and I never deal with her. I'm always busy somewhere when it's time to harness her up. My mom is always great about my fear of horses, but my brothers tease me a lot about my being scared of our old mare. I even miss that part of being with my family. Sometimes, when I'm by myself, I get real weepy thinking about home. My mom's going to be real upset when she sees how skinny I am." He paused, then added, "Think anything will ever be the same again?"

"I don't know," I said. "I thought nobody but me ever worried about that sort of thing. Some nights I dream about eating with my family at the big dinner table with all the food I want. Sitting there in clean clothes and listening to my dad talk about the bank sounds pretty good to me right now, just like heaven. Lots of times I forget why I'm

fighting and would like to take off and go home for a while just to get some peace. Do you ever dream about refusing to obey your officer and wake up in a sweat thinking about the consequences?"

Paddlefoot looked amazed. "I was having that dream just before I heard you in the river. I wonder if all troops have the same strange dreams? Maybe I'm not crazy after all!"

We sat there for a while in complete silence, drying out in the sunshine with a sense of comradeship forming between us. It was infinitely peaceful. The day was warming up b sound of furious new gunfire interrupted our thoughts. Between the bursts of sporadic shooting, the only sound was the insects buzzing about in the warming morning sun. All the birds and animals were either gone or quietly burrowed-in somewhere. We agreed they were a lot smarter than men.

"Well, it's time we headed back. They'll be surprised to see me after they think I drowned. I can't repay you for what you just did for me, but sometime I hope to get a chance. By the way, my name's Micah, Micah Tolliver."

"Nice meeting you, Micah," Paddlefoot said. "It was just nice to talk to someone for a while away from all that madness. Just for a few minutes, I felt like I wasn't all alone here in this hell. If you ever come out to Texas, look me up on the Pedernales. Just ask for the Martin farm." With those words, he grasped my hand firmly, asked me to take care of myself, turned and dove into the river to return to the defense of the far shore.

**"Do you ever dream about refusing to obey your officer and wake up in a sweat thinking about the consequences?"**

# For one, Please

By  
Laurel Fryer-Smith

"Did you go to the Miles Davis concert?" I asked my friend and fellow jazz buff, Kaye. "No, I missed it," she replied, disappointment obvious in her voice. "I couldn't get anyone to go with me," she added apologetically. I did not ask her why she didn't go by herself, for I already knew. She is one of a group of women, of which I was once a part, who are unwilling to venture forth unaccompanied, though they wish they had the courage to do so.

Rather than go alone, they miss concerts they want to hear, movies they will never have an opportunity to see again, exhibits by favorite artists or lectures on subjects they hold dear. It is not their personal safety with which they are concerned, although this may be a peripheral issue. No, these women fear the discomfort and self-consciousness they are sure they will experience walking down the aisle to their seats at a concert, standing in a line they are convinced contains no one else who is by herself, or making their way unaccompanied through an exhibit.

These women have missed the empowering sense of independence and liberation which the ability to enjoy things on their own will give them. They will not know, until they try, that entertaining themselves on their own is not a second-class way to experience life; it is an enjoyable alternative. And it is a social skill which rewards those who risk the initial discomfort with a fine sense of dignity and a new belief in themselves.

Unlike a speech read in front of a mirror before being presented in public or the sonata practiced in private before it is performed, to go alone, as the Nike commercial prompts, you must "Just do it!" Many years ago, my late husband and I had season tickets to the symphony. When he was out of town on those Friday nights, I would turn the tickets in if I could not find someone else to join me. And then one Friday, looking at the tickets, I discovered they were for a performance by my favorite pianist, Alicia Delarocca. I vowed to go.

My enjoyment in dressing for the occa-

sion and my eagerness to hear the music banished much of my fear of going unescorted. I handed my ticket to the tuxedoed usher, ascended the stairs to the upper regions of the War Memorial Opera House and found my seat. And in that reverential moment of silence when the house lights dimmed and all assembled eagerly awaited the appearance of the soloist, I smiled in the darkness. For not only had I done something I had been afraid to do — attend unescorted — but the concert was mine to enjoy. An evening I would formerly have denied myself unfolded before me.

What is the discomfort and vulnerability women feel they will experience on their own? What makes them afraid of being out in public alone? They are afraid not only that everyone will notice they are alone but will make judgments about why they are alone. And while it goes without saying that they will never discover what people are thinking, many women are nevertheless sure the thoughts involve some form of censure.

A friend of mine recently expressed just such sentiments. She had been going to the airport and had wanted to stop at our favorite coffeehouse, Weatherstone. Finding that

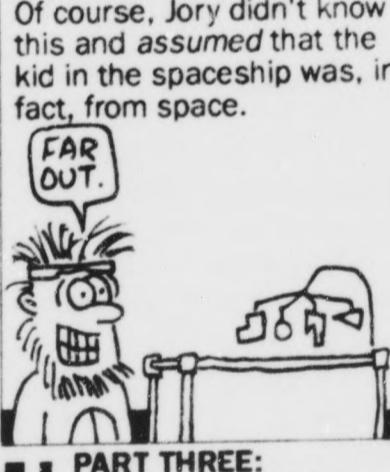
I was not at home, she decided to try going by herself. As she approached the cafe, however, her courage failed her and she went on to the airport.

"Why didn't you go in?" I asked. "People would stare at me," she said, blushing. "And they'd think I had no friends and I couldn't get anybody to go with me. And they'd think I was lonely."

I was sorely tempted to respond, "So what! Who cares?" But I remembered having similar misgivings the first time I went out by myself, and I knew she couldn't feel quite so insouciant yet. I also remembered the joy of conquering those feelings when I realized how silly it was to allow people to rob me of an experience I wished to enjoy, on the specious premise that they might be making judgments or assumptions about why I had chosen to be alone.

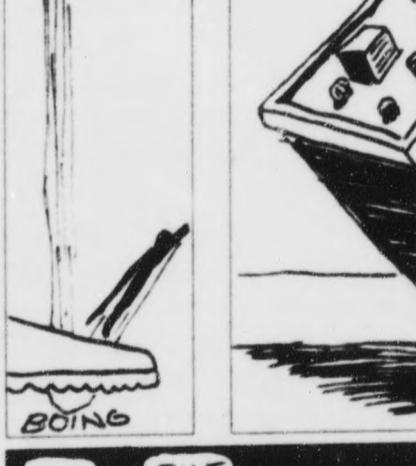
So instead I said, "Pretend it's just an experiment. Think of something irreverent or irrelevant, something to make you smile as you walk in. Think about what you want to do, not about what anyone may or may not be thinking." I was delighted to hear from her a week later that she'd "made it"; she had gone to Weatherstone for that piece

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Kent W. Leslie presents:

## SUPERDUPERMAN!



Next month:  
Now that we know the true origins of Superduperman, will he get out of this one alive? The betting pool is open.

Plus: Who knocked over the bank? Stay tuned.

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## The wave

BY JOLIE LUCAS

It builds gradually. Almost so slowly that denial of its existence can prevail. Yet, as time passes, there is no denial. A once-amorphous being takes shape, a fragile outline of the things to come.

From the shore you view the silver-gray water. Like some half-forgotten dragon in a child's faery tale, it raises its head and slowly forms a crest. On the cutting edge clings a thin border of white foam. Arching and reaching, the water is almost held, frozen in time. Suspended as if a decision from the Creator himself were necessary for the icy water to plunge onto the yielding shoreline.

From the midst of the water you watch, sure only of the progression you now observe. Whatever hand put this fury in motion surely has better vantage. Gradually it extends to encompass your entirety. Almost fearing, you look straight up into the face of the swell.

As it crashes you lose your footing in the soft sand.

There is a tremendous pull on your body. This force tries to take your body down and under; further out to sea its goal. A disoriented search for the surface begins. Holding your breath, you fight not to let panic take hold. The senses are overwhelmed; sounds once clear are muted. Your fingers search the sandy bottom. There now — no. Coral rips tender flesh, and a finger of red surges through the salt water.

Legs now steady pull the body erect. Ah — the surface. A forboding of another wave's approach envelops you, but for now each clear breath is a treasured gift.

The view from shore is clearer. The swimmer turns back toward the setting sun. On his face, the pain of flesh torn. He makes his way cautiously out of the surf and falls to the sand. His fingers dig deep in the wet sand as if clinging to a mountain cliff.

Slowly the traveler rises. Regaining an air of composure, he walks toward you. You can clearly see envy on his tired face: envy of the rock on which you sit and hope that one day he might share the vantage you have from the granite.

## Antebellum

BY RUSS ALBRIGHT

It is too quiet.  
The cause of my wakefulness—  
The onset of hostilities.  
My rational mind tells me  
I cannot hear the agonies  
Of the earth.  
I will not be affected  
By this war  
In any personal way.  
But I lie awake  
And suffer for all humanity.  
The only sound  
Heard in the darkness —  
My sigh of despair.

## ESSAY

# Music has the power to soothe the savage beast

By Richard Phelps

As Plato argued in his treatise "On Music: the argument for censorship," certain modes of music have the power to produce harmony or disharmony in the soul (compare Bloom: Rock is a crock, 1988). Whether it was the Phrygian mode or the Lydian or even that boy's night out at the Apollo that made the greatest impression upon the philosopher (a dead Greek male academic), history doesn't record. The point is, the idea has been around for sometime, but until recently there hasn't been a whole lot of proof to back it up.

Recently, though, an incident in a small town in Washington may force us to rethink our notion of the power of music to move the soul and even, it is hoped, the body (see Glanville, Jerry: Music can kiss my butt, 1990).

I believe the place was called Tillicum. And if it wasn't Tillicum, it had a Tillicum ring to it. A group of dangerously large, non-steroid-abusing youths there had taken to congregating in the parking lot of a convenience store. The store in question was that copy-editor's nightmare a Seven (7)-11 (Eleven).

You have probably had a similar thing happen in your neighborhood. Once there on "friendly" corners stood old Gramps Jones' Bicycle Shop, where kids could take their Huffys and Schwinn's in for repair and learn some of the little lessons in life from colorful old Gramps. Might even learn a few useful mechanical skills. That's how the Wright brothers got their start.

But finally old Gramps cashed in his

chips and there was no one to take over the business — except for Gramps' son, of course. But he, having failed at every attempt to become usefully employed in the community, was just then "getting into" real estate and was about to make the one profitable commercial venture of his life — that is, to sell Gramps' property to some convenience store franchise.

Nor was Gramps' grandson interested in carrying on the business because it turns out that he himself was the one of those large, non-steroid-abusing muggernauts, who could think of nothing better than

eleven." Ha! They would immediately realize how impoverished their lives had become. And it must be admitted, saying instead "Let's obnoxious over at the asphalt Nazi barbecue place" does give the experience a somewhat different reading.

It may seem barbarous that something like this could happen in neighborhood after neighborhood across the land, but these youths really have no place to go and they really have nothing to do. Really. And if they did have something to do and some place to do it, they would more than likely do it poorly and, sensing intuitively a se-

them with" him. Gramps was a charming old codger, but he was the last of his breed left uninstitutionalized.

But now the news from Tillicum is that there is a way to make these youths move on — without resorting to one of society's more active deterrents, such as the SWAT team. The answer lies in the power of music. The store owners there have found that if certain kinds of music are broadcast to the parking lot crowd, they will desist of their own free will with vague Kierkegaardian feelings of nausea-cum-dread.

The night they played selections from the 101 strings of Montovani, the authorities found one person about a mile from the scene retching miserably on somebody's lawn, repeating over and over, "All violins, no words, all violins, no UggghhGah . . ."

Montovani — I never thought I would say it, but how useful the sound — as a passive social deterrent, that is. But Montovani may not work for all crowds. For some, Barry Manilow might be the gag-reflex activator of choice. For others, the champagne music man, Lawrence Welk. For the crowd that just won't go away no matter what, I would highly recommend Frankie Yankovich and his Ukrainian Canadians.

The point is, stay flexible. Choose the music that will best set the collective teeth of your target crowd on edge. Then sit back and watch them fleeing for the exits, shouting back at you, "I like music, man, but not that Myxolydian shit."

*Gramps was a charming old codger, but he was the last of his breed left uninstitutionalized.*

having a new parking lot in the neighborhood out of which he and his fellows could hang.

So seemingly overnight, a convenience store is plopped down on "friendly corners America" and no sooner does the store materialize than it becomes a meeting place for the above-mentioned large and somewhat threatening, even if non-steroid-abusing youths. They will proceed to christen the place with a secret name, because if they had to address each other with a straightforward "Let's go down to the 7-

vere loss of self-esteem, would then proceed to trash the place. So you don't want them doing it at your place, right? Hence, the advent of convenience stores.

You're probably thinking, so why didn't they hang out in old Gramps' parking lot? The answer is simple. Old Gramps Jones was a borderline sociopath, who would have taken great delight in using skills honed in two major military conflicts to drive off any youth who would dare to trespass and even, as he so often repeated, wouldn't have minded "taking a few of

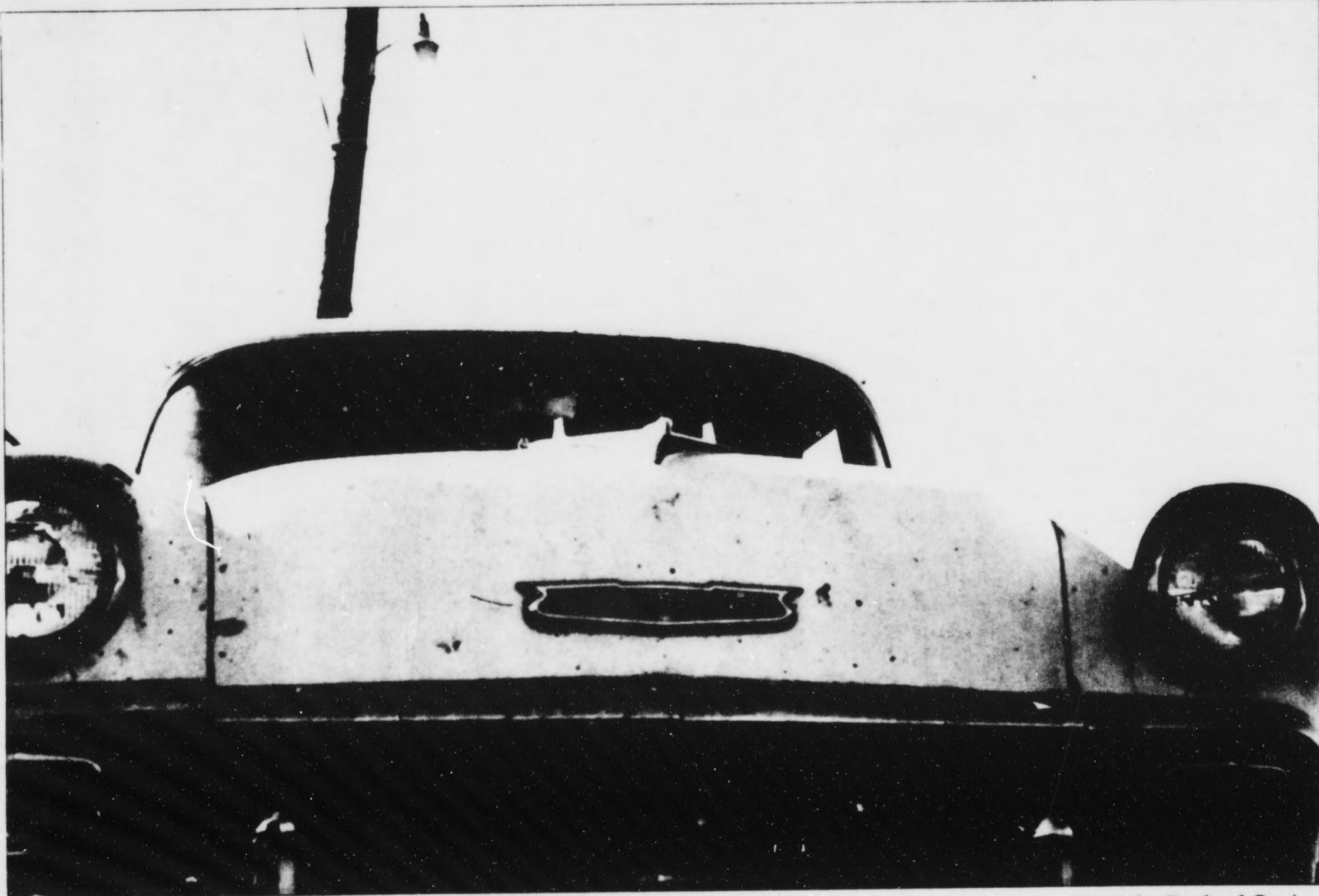


Photo by Rachael Orvino

## For one, from page 10

of Black Forest cake she'd been thinking about. "I wanted to sit by the window, sip my Cappuccino, enjoy that chocolate cake and have fun people-watching."

That is the secret to overcoming the discomfort: Concentrate on the event itself. Remember how much you want to see the exhibit by the photographer you have long admired. Think what pleasure you will derive from the lecturer who rarely makes an appearance and is now in town. When you discover on that cold and overcast Sunday afternoon that it's the last day to see a movie high on your "must-see" list, but can find no one to join you, try it by yourself. And when you do, you will probably discover you were so absorbed in the beauty of the film itself, you didn't give a thought to your fellow movie-goers!

There is another thing women tell themselves which keeps them from doing things on their own: that it will not be any fun. I asked a friend, a long-time fan of Jean Auel, if she had been to Auel's recent lecture. "No, I really wanted to go, but my friend canceled at the last minute and it wouldn't have been any fun by myself," she said.

How could she possibly know that? Would it have been any less thrilling to hear Auel recount how she had come up with the idea of *Clan of the Cave Bear*, a novel for which she was paid the highest advance for

any unpublished author?

Would Todd Walton's one-man show at Melarkey's be any less hilarious or the drink the waitress set before you less delicious if you were by yourself? Standing before the Renoir that until now you've only seen in art books, would you feel any less reverence because you did not bring someone with you? Would one note of your favorite Mozart sonata be less sublime if you went to the concert alone? I offer you these examples from the richness of my

another way to enjoy yourself. It is a heady feeling indeed to ask yourself: "Where shall I go today?" and know that you no longer need to answer: "Nowhere, if I can't find anybody to go with me."

The awareness that your excursions are limited only by your imagination, not by the want of a companion, brings with it a powerful sense of independence. Now if you want to try that new sushi bar that's opened in your neighborhood, you don't sit at home because no one you know likes

***"The awareness that your excursions are limited only by your imagination, not by the want of a companion, brings with it a powerful sense of independence."***

experiences and a dash of common sense to tempt you to discover for yourself that the answer is a resounding "No!"

As you give yourself more opportunities to enjoy events on your own, you will discover much of your initial discomfort has vanished, and in its place will be an inner sense of pride and confidence. The pride comes from having conquered the fear of going out alone, the confidence from attaining a new and special skill: an ease in public you formerly lacked, and a quiet sense of sureness that you have discovered

sushi; you go and enjoy a meal. If you have a sudden urge to see the mountains at Tahoe, you go, rather than pine at home about the beauty you will miss. No longer do you lament that it seems no one else likes classical music; you buy a ticket and go to a concert.

Your sense of confidence and independence may well give you the courage to approach others. Perhaps it will be only to share your own zeal with the person seated next to you at a concert, at which all are wildly applauding. You may be emboldened

to introduce yourself to someone you would like to meet. Don't think of others as strangers — think of them as people whom you do not yet know. Remember: Everyone you now know, including your dearest friends, were once strangers. Being introduced by a mutual acquaintance is but one of many ways to meet new people.

I learned this one afternoon, wandering by myself in the Crocker Museum shop. I struck up a conversation with the volunteer who was staffing the shop. I discovered he was a fellow student who shared many of my interests and peculiar sense of humor. It turned out both of us had planned to go to several of the same art receptions that evening, and we decided to go together.

Narrowing your outings and excursions to those which include an escort or companion, ruling out the possibility of experiencing events by yourself, is to exclude a range of opportunities for adventure, new acquaintances and an independence of spirit. Relying solely on the schedules, tastes and availability of your friends and acquaintances is to restrict yourself to what others can or want to do.

Saying, "for one, please," is the opening line of a script which you may write. The setting, the scene, the mood: yours to decide. The other players, too, are yours to choose, for it is your play to direct and produce as you wish. And in the wings, I watch your play and applaud.